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Learning at the beginning of a new millennium

Establishing Outcomes for the Early Childhood Services to Grade 12 Learning System

The Review Committee on Outcomes' Consultation Workbook for Albertans

Alberta
LEARNING

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Deadline for submissions: June 30, 2001

We need your input!

Learning is important.

Educating our children – in our homes, our schools and our communities – is one of the most important endeavours that we as a society can undertake. Young people need our assistance as they prepare to take their places in a rapidly changing world, and all citizens need assurance that future generations will be able to meet life's challenges. The best way to protect our democracy and advance our overall security, prosperity and quality of life is to provide all our children with an excellent education. Alberta has a world-class education system and we want to ensure that we continue to build on this excellence.

Learning is everybody's business.

The important task of providing an excellent education for all requires the active involvement of many people. We each have a stake in our children's learning, yet we often have different visions of what education should be. Therefore, a vital part of the decision-making process is to have people throughout the province come together to talk about education and identify our common desired outcomes.

In our rapidly changing society, the learning system must constantly adapt and evolve.

Public discussions of policies and goals for education are ongoing because we live in an era of constant change. If our learning system is to remain effective, it must adapt to meet a diversity of needs.

Because Alberta has changed, we have the opportunity to step back and take a broader look at what Albertans expect from their learning system and what young people in this province need in order to fulfil their potential. We already have a strong and accountable basic learning system, but we believe we can still do better. To achieve this goal, we need your help.

What is this workbook about?

Minister's Review Committee

The Review Committee on Outcomes was appointed by the Minister of Learning, Dr. Lyle Oberg, with representation from groups affected by or involved in education. These include the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association, the Alberta Schools Boards Association, the Alberta Teachers' Association, the College of Alberta School Superintendents, the Association of School Board Officials of Alberta, as well as representatives of post-secondary institutions,

business, labour, students and community. The Committee's task was to begin a process of mapping out where our learning system should be headed as we enter the new millennium.

Outcomes Framework

The Review Committee has developed a draft framework, which defines broad outcomes for learning in Early Childhood Services (ECS) through Grade 12 in Alberta. After consulting with Albertans and revising the framework accordingly, the learning system will use this list of outcomes as a tool for making decisions about:

- educational strategies, policies and approaches,
- provincial and jurisdiction funding priorities,
- ways to continually improve the quality of learning, and
- effectively measuring the success of education programs.

Your role

We are asking you to provide us with advice about what you expect the ECS through Grade 12 learning system to do for you, for your children and for your future. More specifically, we are asking:

- **What outcomes should the learning system strive to achieve? How will we know we are reaching our goals?**

Context

Let's get started.

The learning system is complex with many different factors contributing to its success. An effective outcomes framework must be broad enough to cover a wide variety of themes, including the following:

A. Student Learning
   - curriculum
   - schooling

B. Opportunity to Learn

C. Meaningful Involvement

D. Teaching and the Profession of Teaching

E. Leadership and Governance

F. Facilities

These themes reflect key aspects of our ECS - Grade 12 learning system. For each of the themes, the Review Committee has developed outcomes describing what we believe Albertans expect the learning system to achieve.

While the learning system may already be achieving many of these outcomes, we are still working toward others. Some of the outcomes could establish new directions for the learning system. We are asking you to comment on the outcomes, to indicate whether you agree with each and to suggest improvements.

Don't be too concerned if the outcomes statements seem very broad and general. They are intended to describe where we want to go. Deciding how to get there will be the major task facing government, school jurisdictions, schools and communities in the years to come.

Instructions

- Because the outcomes listed within each section are interrelated, you are encouraged to review the entire section before providing your input.
- For each outcome listed, please indicate whether you "Strongly Agree", "Agree", are "Neutral" towards, "Disagree", or "Strongly Disagree" with including that outcome in the Outcomes Framework.
- If the meaning of the outcome is not clear to you, please indicate by circling "Not Clear".
- You may wish to respond to all of the outcome statements below, or just one or two. It's up to you.
- Please complete the participant's survey on page 13 and return your workbook to Alberta Learning by June 30, 2001.

Definition of Outcomes

Outcomes are measurable statements of what will be achieved (e.g. improved conditions, behaviour or states that indicate progress toward the achievement of goals). Outcomes are not what a program or activity does, but rather its desired consequences or impacts.

At the end of each section, space is provided for you to respond in greater detail to the outcomes listed. Please feel free to attach additional sheets to the workbook if you require additional space.

Please remember these outcome statements are intended to describe what you would like the learning system to accomplish in the future.

A. Student Learning

Curriculum

Key Question… Should this outcome be included in a final outcomes framework?

Our learning system revolves around the student and learning. In the area of curriculum, **Albertans expect that:**

1. Students access a broad program of studies to obtain a solid grounding in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies and have opportunities to pursue the fine arts, languages, career, technology, health, physical education and, where appropriate, religious education. *(This is an outcomes-based definition of core education.)*

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

2. All students attain high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding through a rich and challenging program.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

3. All students have a basic understanding of a second language.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

4. Students demonstrate prescribed curriculum outcomes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

5. Students achieve graduation requirements.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

Do you have any additions, suggestions for improvement, or general comments relating to the outcomes listed above?

_____

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_____

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Please Remember…
these outcomes statements are intended to describe what you would like the learning system to accomplish.

Schooling

The experience of students is broader than just curriculum. With respect to school and the experience of learning, **Albertans expect that:**

6. The learning system contributes to the development of the intellectual, social, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of each child.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

7. Students learn to their maximum individual potential.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

8. Students demonstrate active citizenship.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

9. Students demonstrate the skills and attitudes for lifelong learning.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

10. Students demonstrate preparedness for work.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

11. Students make successful transitions to post-secondary learning.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

Do you have any additions, suggestions for improvement, or general comments relating to the outcomes listed above?

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B. Opportunity to Learn

Key Question… Should this outcome be included in a final outcomes framework?

To ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn, **Albertans expect that:**

1. Every child comes to school ready and able to learn.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

2. All students are provided a high standard of assistance, support and equitable opportunity to learn.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

3. Children at risk have their needs addressed through effective integrated programs and supports.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

4. Students and staff participate in a safe and caring school environment in which parents are confident that their children are learning in an atmosphere of trust, respect and inclusiveness.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

5. Students learn in appropriately sized groups and settings.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

Do you have any additions, suggestions for improvement, or general comments relating to the outcomes listed above?

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Please Remember…
these outcomes statements are intended to describe what you would like the learning system to accomplish.

C. Meaningful Involvement

Parents, staff and community members play an essential role in our learning system. To support meaningful involvement in the learning system, **Albertans expect that:**

1. Parents are actively involved in their children's education.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

2. The voices of parents, school community and society are heard and valued.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

3. Systematic and sustainable partnerships are fostered among the school, families and the community, and school councils are supported.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

4. Staff members are heard, respected and valued.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

Do you have any additions, suggestions for improvement, or general comments relating to the outcomes listed above?

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D. Teaching and the Profession of Teaching

Teachers play a key role in the learning system and, **Albertans expect that:**

Key Question…
Should this outcome be included in a final outcomes framework?

1. High quality teaching provided by ethical and qualified professionals is made available to all students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

2. A positive teacher-student relationship exists.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

3. Effective teaching and learning practices are respected and valued.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

4. Teacher preparation and certification processes are of the highest quality.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

5. The status of the teaching profession is recognized.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

Do you have any additions, suggestions for improvement, or general comments relating to the outcomes listed above?

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Please Remember… these outcomes statements are intended to describe what you would like the learning system to accomplish.

E. Leadership and Governance

From government to school boards, superintendents and principals, leadership and governance play a key role in the learning system. In this area **Albertans expect that:**

1. The learning system is characterized by ongoing school improvement.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

2. Consultation and proven research guide policy decisions in the learning system.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

3. Student learning is supported by student evaluation policies and practices that provide information on important outcomes.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

4. Alberta's locally-elected school boards are accountable to their electorates and responsive to their local communities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

5. All children have access to a core education provided at no cost to them by the public education system.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

6. All elements of the learning system are highly accountable and communicate effectively with the public.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

7. Effective and facilitative leadership supports teaching and learning.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

8. The highest priority of the learning system is the success of every student.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

Do you have any additions, suggestions for improvement, or general comments relating to the outcomes listed above?

Key Question…
Should this outcome be included in a final outcomes framework?

_____

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F. Facilities

The environment in which we learn is important. In the area of school facilities, **Albertans expect that:**

1. Facilities meet the program needs of students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

2. Facilities meet the physical needs of students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Clear

Do you have any additions, suggestions for improvement, or general comments relating to the outcomes listed above?

_____

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General Comments

Please feel free to share any additional thoughts or advice you may have regarding the outcomes framework.

Participant's Survey

To assist us in analysing the feedback we receive, please provide the following information.

1. This workbook is being submitted by:

___ one person
___ a group of (how many?)_____ people

2. I am responding to this workbook mainly as a/an:

Each person should check only one of the options listed below. For example, if you are both a teacher and a parent, indicate which role you are taking in providing your responses to this workbook. If you are submitting the workbook on behalf of a group, please indicate the number of people in the group who are students, parents, etc.

___ ECS to Grade 12 student
___ Teacher or administrator involved in ECS to Grade 12 education
___ Staff member of a ECS to Grade 12 school or school jurisdiction
___ Trustee of a school jurisdiction
___ Parent of a child in ECS to Grade 12
___ Employer or business person
___ Student, faculty member, administrator, or staff member of a post-secondary institution
___ Community member
___ Other _____ (please specify)

3. I live in a:

___ Major city (Edmonton or Calgary)
___ Other city
___ Town or Village
___ Hamlet, county or other rural area

4. Please identify the city, town or village where (or closest to where) you reside:

_____

Optional Contact Information

Providing your name and contact information is optional, but will enable us to provide you with more information about the Outcomes Framework. This information will be kept confidential.

Please forward additional information about the Outcomes Framework to:

Name _____
Address _____
Town/City _____
Postal Code _____

Daytime phone (with area code): _____
E-mail address: _____

How to submit your comments

Thank you for your input. Please leave completed workbooks with your regional meeting facilitator, or drop them off at any Alberta government office (please check the blue pages in your telephone directory for locations). You may also mail them to this address:

Review Committee on Outcomes Workbook
Alberta Learning
7th Floor, Commerce Place
10155 – 102 Street
Edmonton AB
T5J 4L5

For an online, interactive version of this workbook, go to the Alberta Learning website www.learning.gov.ab.ca/ and look for the RCO link.

If you have questions, please call (780)-422-1608, or fax (780)-422-5129, or e-mail: rco.contact@learning.gov.ab.ca
To be connected toll-free, call 310-0000.

Please return your completed workbook by June 30, 2001.

Thank you for your input!

Appendix A: List of Committee Members

The Review Committee on Outcomes included the following members:

- Jim Dueck, Assistant Deputy Minister, System Improvement and Reporting Division
- Elizabeth Dobrovolsky representing the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association (AHSCA);
- Leroy Sloan representing the Alberta School Boards' Association (ASBA);
- Ed Wittchen representing the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS);
- Doug Pudwell representing the Association of School Board Officials of Alberta (ASBOA);
- Gordon Thomas representing the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA);
- Tom Thompson representing the Public Colleges and Technical Institutions of Alberta;
- Jim Parsons representing the Universities Coordinating Council;
- Jim Selby representing the Alberta Federation of Labour;
- Doug Clovechok representing the Calgary Chamber of Commerce;
- Dorcas Kilduff, a parent at large;
- Jack Ady, a member-at-large.

As well, the committee received input from two student representatives:

- Naomi Agard representing the Council of Alberta University Students;
- Stephen Page, an Edmonton high-school student.

Appendix B: Public Meetings

Public discussion groups will take place between May 15th and June 15th in the following regional centers:

- Vermilion
- Lethbridge
- Medicine Hat
- Edmonton
- Calgary
- Red Deer
- Fort McMurray
- Grande Prairie
- Edson

Locations and times will be advertised prior to the meetings.

If you have any questions on the Review Committee on Outcomes, please contact Alberta Learning at (780) 427-2285 or (780) 422-1608. Callers living outside Edmonton can be connected toll free by dialing 310-000. Questions may also be forwarded via e-mail to rco.contact@learning.gov.ab.ca

Appendix C: Proposed Outcomes Framework*

A. Student Learning

Outcomes relating to the curriculum

1. Students access a broad program of studies to obtain a solid grounding in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies and have opportunities to pursue the fine arts, languages, career, technology, health, physical education, and where appropriate, religious education. (*Outcomes based definition of core education.*)
2. All students attain high standards of knowledge, skills and understanding through a rich and challenging program.
3. All students have a basic understanding of a second language.
4. Students demonstrate prescribed curriculum outcomes.
5. Students achieve graduation requirements.

Outcomes relating to schooling

6. The learning system contributes to the development of the intellectual, social, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of each child.
7. Students learn to their maximum individual potential
8. Students demonstrate active citizenship
9. Students demonstrate the skills and attitudes for life-long learning;
10. Students demonstrate preparedness for work.
11. Students will make successful transitions to post-secondary learning.

B. Opportunity to Learn

1. Every child will come to school ready and able to learn.
2. All students are provided a high standard of assistance, support and equitable opportunity to learn.
3. Children at risk will have their needs addressed through effective integrated programs and supports.
4. Students and staff participate in a safe and caring school environment in which parents are confident that their children are learning in an atmosphere of trust, respect and inclusiveness.
5. Students learn in appropriately sized groups and settings.

*The numbering of themes and outcomes is intended to facilitate discussion and feedback. No particular rank ordering is being suggested.

C. Meaningful Involvement

1. Parents are actively involved in their children's education.
2. The voices of parents, school community, and society are heard and valued.
3. Systematic and sustainable school/family/community partnerships and school councils are fostered.
4. Staff members are heard, respected and valued.

D. Teaching and the Profession of Teaching

1. High quality teaching provided by ethical, qualified, professionals is made available to all students.
2. A positive teacher – student relationship exists.
3. Effective teaching and learning practices are respected and valued.
4. Teacher preparation and certification processes are of the highest quality.
5. The status of the teaching profession is recognized.

E. Leadership and Governance

1. The learning system is characterized by ongoing school improvement.
2. Consultation and proven research guide policy decisions in the learning system.
3. Student learning is supported by student evaluation policies and practices that provide information on important outcomes.
4. Alberta's locally elected school boards are accountable to their electorates and responsive to their local communities.
5. All children shall have access to a core education provided at no cost to them by the public education system.
6. All elements of the Learning System are highly accountable and communicate effectively with the public.
7. Effective and facilitative leadership supports teaching and learning.
8. The highest priority of the learning system is the success of every student.

F. Facilities

1. Facilities meet the program needs of students.
2. Facilities meet the physical needs of students.

Appendix D: Statement of Purpose and Definitions

Agreed purposes of the outcomes framework:

- To guide policy makers.
- To inform the government in determining overall provincial funding for the K-12 system. (Note: The RCO is not facilitating an incentive funding program.)
- To influence and inform government priorities.
- To evaluate the progress of the learning system.
- To articulate a vision for ECS – Grade 12 learning.
- To clarify the roles of various levels of the learning system.
- To enhance the accountability of the learning system and its components.
- To unify existing provincial outcome statements.
- To foster the continuous improvement of schooling for students.
- To help the learning system and its components respond to changing needs.
- To empower the components of the learning system.

Definitions:

The Learning System ...
represents the collective efforts of all those whose primary purpose entails governing and/or facilitating and/or providing a structured learning environment through which an education program is offered to an ECS to grade 12 student. This consists primarily, but not exclusively, of publicly funded public, separate and Francophone schools and school jurisdictions, private schools and the department of Alberta Learning.

The School Community ...
consists of all persons receiving, providing, facilitating or otherwise supporting or benefiting from student learning within a particular structured learning environment through which an education program is offered to a student. Typically, the school community consists of students, parents and guardians, teachers, school administrators, support staff, volunteers, district administrators and trustees. As well, the school community includes public and private organizations and agencies providing services to students within the school or relating to their schooling and, additionally, individuals and businesses residing in the neighbourhood served by the school.

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